

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB CI
SUBJECT: SOLIDARITY VISIT: AFL-CIO PRESS CONFERENCE

1. THE AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY VISIT CONCLUDED MAY 23 WITH A
PRESS CONFERENCE THE MAIN POINTS OF WHICH ARE REPORTED
BELOW. WE WILL REPORT BY SEPTTEL ON OVERALL VISIT.

2. IN THEIR DETAILED STATEMENT TO THE PRESS AFL-CIO
VICE-PRESIDENTS CHAIKIN AND GLEASON DESCRIBED AS CORDIAL
BUT FRANK THEIR TWO HOUR CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT
PINOCHET. THEY EMPHASIZED THAT PINOCHET WAS IN GENERAL
AGREEMENT WITH THE NEED TO RESTORE TRADE UNION FREEDOMS
AND THAT HE HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THE RIGHT OF AIFLD TO HOLD
COURSES WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO
CHAIKIN THERE WERE TWO BASIC PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH THE
PRESIDENT ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR A FREE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING,
THE RIGHT TO ELECT TRADE UNION LEADERS, THE RIGHT TO
ASSEMBLE AND EVEN THE RIGHT TO STRIKE, PINOCHET BELIEVED
THAT ONLY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COULD BE CONFERRED IN THE
NEAR TERM WHILE THE OTHER RIGHTS WOULD HAVE TO WAIT FOR
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SOME FUTURE PERIOD. CHAIKIN POINTED OUT THAT AN AFL-CIO
MEMORANDUM GIVEN TO THE PRESIDENT ASKED FOR ALL TRADE UNION
RIGHTS TO BE CONFERRED NOW OR WITHOUT UNDUE DELAY. ACCORD-
ING TO CHAIKIN, THE PRESIDENT ALSO USED THE WORDS TRADE
UNION FREEDOM IN A SENSE NOT COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD BY
AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISTS. THE AFL-CIO'S UNDERSTANDING OF
TRADE UNION FREEDOM PRECLUDED ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL

PARTY, OR CHURCH INTERVENTION IN THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS OR IN CHOOSING, APPOINTING OR REMOVING TRADE UNION LEADERS.

3. GLEASON EMPHASIZED THAT THE GROUP MET WITH ALL ELEMENTS OF THE CHILEAN DEMOCRATIC LABOR AND HAD TRIED TO BRING THE VARIOUS GROUPS TOGETHER. GLEASON SAID THAT HE DID NOT COME TO CHILE TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY.

4. BOTH LEADERS IN SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONING STATED THAT THEY SHED NO TEARS AT THE DOWNFALL OF THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT BELIEVING THAT HE WOULD HAVE INEXORABLY STALINIZED THE COUNTRY. THEY INDICATED THAT THE AFL-CIO HAD BEEN HOPEFUL THAT AFTER A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TIME A CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS WOULD BEGIN TO BE ESTABLISHED. THEY EXPRESSED THEIR DEEP REGRET AT THE FAILURE OF THE PINOCHET GOVERNMENT TO DO SO WITHIN A YEAR OR TWO OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT. GLEASON REITERATED THAT HE WAS VERY DISCOURAGED WITH THE PRESENT LACK OF TRADE UNION FREEDOM -- INDEED THAT HE WAS LEAVING CHILE MORE DISHEARTENED TOWARDS THE GOC THAN WHEN HE ARRIVED. CHAIKIN COMPARED THE SITUATION PERTAINING TO TRADE UNION AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO SOMETHING "NOT SEEN IN THE CIVILIZED WORLD FOR SEVERAL DECADES EXCEPT IN TOTALITARIAN REGIMES SUCH AS THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA".

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5. CHAIKIN DIPLOMATICALLY ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT "SUGGESTIONS" THEY LEFT WITH PINOCHET COULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED OVERNIGHT OR EVEN WITHIN A FEW WEEKS. THEY REQUIRE CAREFUL THOUGHT AND PLANNING. HOPEFULLY, CHAIKIN SAID, THE AFL-CIO WOULD RECEIVE AN ANSWER TO ITS MEMORANDUM WITHIN A "SHORT PERIOD OF TIME". BOTH HE AND GLEASON SAID THAT THEIR REPORTS TO THE AFL-CIO AND "TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES" WOULD NOT BE VERY FAVORABLE.

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